

Message Text

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ACTION H-03

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: OREP (EDGAR, ROBERT W.) EG
SUBJECT: CODEL EDGAR MEETING WITH PRESIDENT SADAT

1 CODEL EDGAR, ACCOMPANIED BY AMBASSADOR, MRS. EDGAR AND MR. AND MRS. ROBERT DEE, MET FOR ONE-HALF HOUR WITH PRESIDENT SADAT ON APRIL 17 AT THE BARRAGES. SINCE CODEL DEPARTED CAIRO EARLY APRIL 18, THIS MESSAGE HAS NOT BEEN CLEARED. REQUEST DEPARTMENT SHOW IT TO CODEL FOR ANY CORRECTIONS OR ADDITIONS HE MIGHT WISH TO MAKE.

2. SADAT BEGAN BY SAYING HE WISHED TO TAKE OCCASION OF HIS FIRST MEETING WITH MEBER OF CONGRESS SINCE HIS APRIL 4-6 VISIT TO WASHINGTON TO EXPRESS HIS GRATITUDE FOR THE WELCOME EXTENDED TO HIM BY PRESIDENT CARTER AND MEMBERS OF CONGRESS. HE WAS "VERY HAPPY" WITH HIS VISIT WHICH HE BELIEVED HAD FURTHER CEMENTED BILATERAL RELATIONS. HE LOOKS FORWARD TO THE FUTURE WITH "MUCH MORE OPTIMISIM." HE ALSO EXPRESSED "DEEP GRATITUDE FOR THE VERY GALLANT ACTION" BY THE PRESIDENT AND THE CONGRESS FOR THE SPECIAL AID PACKAGE OFFERED FOLLOWING THE JANUARY "DIFFICULTIES". HE SAID HIS MAIN TASK IS TO IMPROVE THE ECONOMY, BUT IT WILL TAKE TIME. HE URGED THAT THE CURRENT AID LEVELS BE MAINTAINED AT LEAST UNTIL 1980 SINCE THIS WOULD PUT EGYPT IN A MUCH BETTERN POSITION T FACE ITS DIFFICULTIES. EVEN THEN EGYPT FACED ENORMOUS
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PROBLEMS BECAUSE OF ITS POPULATION GROWTH OF WELL OVER TWO PERCENT PER YEAR.

3. IN RESPONSE TO CODEL QUERY ABOUT POPULATION CONTROL MEASURES, SADAT SAID HE IS TRYING HIS BEST. IN THE CITIES THERE IS PROGRESS; BUT IN THE COUNTRYSIDE, THE PEOPLE FEEL THAT POPULATION CONTROL MEASURES ARE AGAINST ISLAM, AND IN ADDITON, THEY PREFER

BIG FAMILIES TO WORK IN THE FIELDS. IT WAS, THEREFORE, A DIFFICULT PROBLEM.

4. CODEL ASKED IN WHAT AREAS THE U.S. COULD BE OF MOST ASSISTANCE. SADAT SAID THAT HE WOULD BE CONCENTRATING DURING THE NEXT THREE YEARS ON FOOD AND HOUSING. PRODUCTIVITY HAD TO BE INCREASED AND THERE WAS A GREAT NEED FOR MODERN TECHNOLOGY. EGYPT SUFFERED FROM HERITAGE OF MARXISM AND ISOLATION FROM THE WORLD ECONOMY DURING THE PAST 20 YEARS. THE OPEN DOOR WAS DESIGNED TO OVERCOME THIS ISOLATION BUT IT WILL TAKE SOME TIME. HIS IDEA IS TO GIVE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF NEW PROJECTS TO "FOREIGN KNOW-HOW" AND TO CREAT JOINT VENTURES; E.G. FOR AGRIBUSINESS COMPLEXES EGYPT COULD PROVIDE PUBLIC LAND, PRIVATE SECTOR COULD PROVIDE MANPOWER AND OTHER FACILITIES, AND FOREIGN COMPANIES THE MANAGEMENT AND TECHNOLOGY. PRESIDENT SAID THAT THE CABINET WILL SOON ESTABLISH A SPECIAL "AUTHORITY" HEADED BY THE PRIME MINISTER AND THE ECONOMIC GROUP (I.E., DEP PM KAISSOUNI AND MINISTERS OF PLANNING, ECONOMY, FINANCE AND TRADE AND SUPPLY). THE PURPOSE OF THIS AUTHORITY WOULD BE TO FACILITATE THE WAY FOR FOREIGN SOURCES OF HELP TO WORK IN EGYPT AND TO OVERCOME OBSTACLES (SEE SEPTTEL). EGYPT MUST, THE PRESIDENT SAID, REGAIN THE SENSE OF INITIATIVE LOST DURING THE PAST 20 YEARS.

5. CODEL ASKED HOW THE PRESIDENT EVALUATES THE POSSIBILITIES FOR PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST. SADAT SAID HE WAS "VERY GRATEFUL" TO PRESIDENT CARTER FOR GIVING THE MIDDLE EAST "FIRST PRIORITY". HE THOUGH THE MIDDLE EAST WAS THE MOST DANGEROUS AREA IN THE WORLD BECAUSE THE TWO SUPERPOWERS ARE FACING EACH OTHER. LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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FURTHERMORE, , THE AFRICAN DIMENSION SHOULD NOT BE IGNORED SINCE EGYPT IS THE "DOOR TO AFRICA". SADAT SAID THAT A GREAT OPPORTUNITY EXISTS TO ESTABLISH PEACE DURING THIS YEAR AND THE CARDS ARE IN THE HANDS OF THE U.S. THERE HAS "NEVERY BEEN SUCH A CHANCE FOR PEACE IN THE PAST 25 YEARS, ESPECIALLY FROM THE ARAB SIDE." HOWEVER, "ISRAEL FEARS PEACE". WHEN HE LAUNCHED HIS INITIATIVE IN 1971 BY SAYING EGYPT WAS READY FOR PEACE AND TO RECOGNIZE THE EXISTENCE OF ISRAEL, NO OTHER ARAB LEADER WOULD HAVE DARED TO MAKE SUCH A STATEMENT. HOWEVER, NOBODY HAD PAID ATTENTION AND HE HAD FOUND IT NECESSARY TO FIGHT THE OCTOBER WAR. FOLLOWING THE OCTOBER WAR, SADAT SAID, EGYPT HAD WORKED CLOSELY WITH THE US AND GREATLY ANGERED THE USSR. TOGETHER HE AND US HAD ACHIEVED SINAI I AND II AND GOLAN DISENGAGEMENT AGREEMENT, LARGELY THROUGH US INITIATIVE. SADAT HAD BEEN VIGOROUSLY ATTACKED FOR SINAI II BY SYRIANS AND PALESTINIANS BUT NOW THEY "ARE WILLING TO SIT IN GENEVA AND CONCLUDE A PEACE AGREEMENT WITH ISRAEL." RELATIONS WITH SYRIA HAVE PROGESSED SO FAR THAT A POLITICAL UNION HAS BEEN FORMED. ISRAEL, SADAT SAID, IS IN TURMOIL. WHATEVER WERE THE

CAUSES OF RABIN'S RESIGNATION, ISRAELIS ARE NOT READY FOR PEACE. THEY SAY THEY WILL NOT LEAVE THE OCCUPIED LANDS WITHOUT CONCESSIONS, "AS IF IT WERE THEIR LAND."

SADAT SAID
HE WOULD PREFER TO DEAL WITH GOLDA MEIR, WHO WAS A STRONG LEADER WHEREAS "IF WE JUDGE PERES BY WHAT HE HAS WRITTEN, IT IS A HOPELESS CASE. LET US HOPE HE WILL ACT DIFFERENTLY WHEN HE ASSUMES POWER."

6. CODEL MENTIONED THE IMPORTANCE OF STRONG CAPABLE LEADERS IN SUCH TIMES. HE SAID HE BELIEVED PRESIDENT CARTER WAS SUCH A LEADER. PRESIDENT SADAT AGREED. HE SAID AS SOON AS HE HAD MET PRESIDENT CARTER, THEY HAD BEGUN TO ESTABLISH A "DEEP PERSONAL FRIENDSHIP." HE HAD TOLD PRESIDENT CARTER THAT THE ISRAELIS WILL PLAY FOR TIME AND DELAY, BUT IF HE (PRES. CARTER) IS STRONG ENOUGH TO PUSH FOR PEACE THIS YEAR IT CAN BE ACHIEVED. FORMER SECRETARY KISSINGER HAD DONE IT IN SUCH A WAY AT THE TIME OF THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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FIRST DISENGAGEMENT AGREEMENT. THE ISRAELIS HAD BEEN VERY TOUGH AND A DEADLOCK WAS REACHED AT ASWAN. KISSINGER THEN DRAFTED AN AMERICAN PROPOSAL AND SUBMITTED IT WHICH BECAME THE SINAI I AGREEMENT. "THIS IS THE MAIN SIGNIFICANCE OF WHAT THE US CAN DO. I AM READY TO DISCUSS ALL ISSUES. I TRUST PRESIDENT CARTER AND I AM SURE WE CAN HAVE PEACE THIS YEAR."

7. CODEL EDGAR EXPRESSED HIS APPRECIATION FOR RECEIVING PRESIDENT SADAT'S VIEWS AND SAID HE WOULD SHARE THEM WITH HIS COLLEAGUES IN THE CONGRESS. HE STRONGLY BELIEVED THAT IF PEACE CAN BE ACHIEVED IN THE MIDDLE EAST IT CAN BECOME AN IMPORTANT AND PROSPEROUS AREA FOR THE WORLD AND ITS OWN PEOPLES.

8. COMMENT: SADAT LOOKED VERY TIRED AND SUBSEQUENTLY ACKNOWLEDGED TO AMBASSADOR THAT HE HAD FOUND HIS TRIP TO WASHINGTON VERY EXHAUSTING.
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